

COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, December 10, 2014 (10 am – 11 am)

I. Welcome

Kimberly Wasserman – Chairman

I would like us to pay our respect as a Commission to the passing of Judy Bar Topinka.

II. Introductions

A. Springfield Videoconference

- Ken Page, IEPA
- Chris Pressnall, IEPA
- Elmo Dowd, IEPA
- Alec Messina, IERG
- Diane Lopez Hughes, NAACP

B. Chicago Videoconference

- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO
- Sharonda Williams
- Kate Tomford, DCEO

C. Teleconference

- Elmo Dowd, IEPA
- Keith Harley, CLC
- Gloria Williams, DNR
- Bola Delano, IDOT
- Latonya Lumpkin, IDOA
- Mary McDonald, IEPA
- Millard Driskell
- Joe Mitchell, IDPH
- Kristine Baumstark, IEC

III. Approval of Agenda (electronic copy)

- Motion- Alec Messina, IERG
- Second- Millard Driskell
- Motion Carried

IV. Approval of the Minutes

a. September 17, 2014

- Motion- Millard Driskell
- Second- Joe Mitchell, IDPH
- Motion Carried

b. Approval of minutes from Brownfields Redevelopment sub-committee

- Motion- Kim Wasserman
- Second- Millard Driskell
- Motion Carried

V. Agency Involvement and Oversight Update

- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO- We will begin with interagency letters. We made changes to the letters based on conversations with agency Commissioners.
- Alec Messina, IERG- With holidays and the transition in Springfield I suggest moving the response deadline to February 9th or end of January.
- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO- Can you explain the transition process?
- Millard Driskell- The transition period is at least a month.
- Ken Page, IEPA- We are not sure who the agency heads who will be after the transition.
- Alec Messina, IERG- The biggest driver is when the Administration makes decisions in regard to Directors.
- Ken Page, IEPA- We are unsure who will be our contacts at the agencies after the transition.
- Alec Messina, IERG- From a sign off perspective there will be piles of folders and other things backed up at the beginning of 2015.
- Kate Tomford, DCEO- We filled out initial questionnaire and probably will answer the specific questions shortly. It isn't such an onerous task.
- Gloria Williams, IDNR- IDNR has a lot of questions. We would need a little longer. We need to go to different departments to address the questions.
- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO- Let's push the deadline to January 31, 2015.
- Ken Page, IEPA- Maybe we should send the questionnaires to the agency representatives on the Commission?
- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO- Folks wanted their Directors to know what they were up to in regard to the Commission.
- Kate Tomford, DCEO- Send it to Commissioner but cc: the Directors. If an individual wants approval from their Director they can make that decision. Avoid the series of steps to get sign off on letters.
- Joe Mitchell, IDPH- I think the opposite. If Director is cced it will get lost. If we want to highlight our work it should be sent directly to Directors.
- Bola Delano, IDOT- We want everyone to know about the work we are doing on the Commission.
- Ken Page, IEPA- We have a consensus to address the letters to the Directors and cc: the designees.
- Ken Page, IEPA- When will the letters be sent out?
- Sharonda Williams- They will be emailed to the Directors tomorrow.

VI. Brownfields Redevelopment Update

- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO-We have had great conversation around Keith Harley's research. Specifically around community driven brownfield redevelopment the crux of these conversations have been around abandoned sites. What do you do with these deficits to the community? Keith and Sharonda agreed to work on language and Ken suggested a contact on our Brownfields Redevelopment Subcommittee call. We have met with the Cook County Land Bank and we have discussed possible opponents to this legislation.
- Sharonda Williams- One possible opponent that has been identified is the Illinois Realtor's Association. A couple of years ago there was a Land Bank enabling bill and they were vehemently opposed to it.
- Alec Messina, IERG-A one to two-pager would be helpful. I also suggest reaching out to the Illinois Municipal League. I can speak with the IL Realtor's Association and start having conversations with others.
- Kim Wasserman, LVJEO- Right now private developers and municipalities have access to funds that community organizations do not. How can we help communities gain access to these sites and redevelop them into an asset? We are working on a two-pager and will have it in the next couple of weeks.
- Alec Messina, IERG-This is a good time to get concerns out of the way. Since we are early in the process.
- Elmo Dowd, IEPA- There is a model in the south suburbs. They took Brownfield properties and turned them over to the communities. But the communities didn't have the money to do anything with them.
- Ken Page, IEPA-Did the communities end up giving the sites back?
- Elmo Dowd, IEPA- Developers cherry picked those sites to give to the communities.
- Millard Driskell- Developers took the prime properties and left the rest to the city.
- Ken Page, IEPA- The big issue is whether there is an end user to get the benefit. In terms of LUST when it is a private developer there is an end user.
- Bola Delano, IDOT-It is a capacity issue. Developers knew what they were doing. Issue with the State is there are properties in environmental justice communities but there is no technical assistance. There is no advancement of opportunities for communities to align sites and market them. There is a capacity issue when it comes to taking it to the next level.
- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO- I can only speak to Little Village. How can we work with municipalities or solo to access these sites and determine the future use? Established community based organizations or community organizations start planning process and do something with the land. When communities are healthier it makes it more attractive for people to develop prime properties. By the next Brownfield Redevelopment Subcommittee meeting we will have a two-pager for review.

- Elmo Dowd, IEPA-We should look at other states. Tax Increment Districts for example. What is done with the property is 100% increment. There are different models to get Brownfields cleaned up.
- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO-We have looked at Washington and Pennsylvania. Any other examples we can look at?

VII. Old Business

a. Agency Involvement and Oversight Subcommittee Chair

- Check back in 2015 to see if anyone is interested.

b. Clean Power Plan

- A few meetings back we had a presentation from IEPA. Keith Harley was able to touch base with IEPA staff. Sharonda Williams and I had a meeting with the chair of the Illinois Commerce Commission. CEJN submitted their own comments to U.S. EPA and in collaboration with the Illinois Climate Table. We wanted to ensure that environmental justice was represented in the comments from Illinois.

VIII. New Business

a. Web Portal

- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO- The realities are it is difficult to balance jobs and Commission responsibilities. If we can't get a Commissioner to lead on the web portal it may have to go on the backburner for now. We need someone to lead this project.
- Ken Page, IEPA- IEPA would host it.
- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO- I will ask for volunteer in 2015

b. Commission Terms

- Ken Page, IEPA- Commissioners have been sent renewal information even if your term expired.
- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO- Whose terms are expiring?
- Mary McDonald, IEPA- Keith Harley, Cheryl Johnson, Jerry Mead-Lucero, Debra Meyers-Martin and Sylvia Washington. With the transition in Springfield no decisions will be made till 2015.
- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO- I will follow-up with Cheryl Johnson and Sylvia Washington about their Commission appointments. What about Debra Meyer-Martin?
- Ken Page, IEPA-We haven't had active participation.
- Kim Wasserman, LVJEO- We have identified a possible person to fill the government official seat. Bryant Williams works for Cook County and he is very active in environmental justice issues.

IX. Next Meeting Dates

- Ken Page, IEPA-Possibly beginning of March or end of February. We will know the status of the new Commissioners by then. Need to see what the room availability is.
- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO- Please send us dates for consideration.
- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO- Brownfield Subcommittee Call is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21st at 10 a.m.
- Ken Page, IEPA- The entire Commission will get notice for this call.